

# THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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## DeSantis suspends presidential bid, backs Trump

GRAM SLATTERY  
JAMES OLIPHANT  
NATHAN LAYNE

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis ended his fading presidential campaign on Sunday and endorsed Donald Trump just two days before the pivotal New Hampshire primary, leaving former UN ambassador Nikki Haley as Mr. Trump's last long-shot challenger for the Republican nomination.

Mr. DeSantis's decision, less than a week after his deflating loss to Mr. Trump in Iowa despite an enormous investment there, caps a stunning fall from grace after Mr. DeSantis had been widely seen as Republicans' most promising alternative to Mr. Trump ahead of the general election in November.

His departure sets up the one-on-one battle that Ms. Haley has coveted against Mr. Trump, the former president who has maintained an iron grip on the Republican electorate despite facing four criminal prosecutions. Mr. Trump has pleaded not guilty in all the cases.

But Mr. DeSantis's supporters appear more likely to switch allegiance to Mr. Trump than to the more moderate Ms. Haley. In New Hampshire, about two-thirds of DeSantis backers cite Mr. Trump as their second choice, said Andrew Smith, director of the University of New Hampshire Survey Center.

In a video posted on X, Mr. DeSantis endorsed Mr. Trump while delivering a parting shot at Ms. Haley.

■ DESANTIS, A5

Analysis Once a shining star, the Florida Governor falls to Earth ■ A4

## Health system urged to brace for major shift in dementia demographics

KELLY GRANT  
HEALTH REPORTER

One-quarter of people living in Canada with dementia will be South and East Asian by 2050, up from just 8 per cent today, according to a new report that says the health system and community organizations should be prepared for a major shift in the demographics of Alzheimer's and related diseases.

In a study released Monday, the Alzheimer Society of Canada predicts there will be more than 1.7 million people in Canada living with dementia in 2050, nearly three times the estimated 650,000 today. One in four will be Asian, a broad category that includes people with roots in China, Vietnam, Korea, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and other countries.

"I think we are at a very pivotal moment," said Roger Wong, a clinical professor in geriatric medicine at the University of British Columbia. "I do believe we have the opportunity to do something now to make the right choices and take the right types of actions in order to collectively improve dementia care in Canada."

The findings released Monday are the second of a three-volume landmark study the society prepared in co-operation with the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA), a Toronto-based company that uses big data to project socio-economic trends.

■ ALZHEIMER'S, A15

{ RECREATION }



## RETURN TO THE RIDEAU

Skaters glide along the Rideau Canal in Ottawa upon the reopening of a roughly one-kilometre section on Sunday. The National Capital Commission says it will open more of the skateway as ice conditions become safer, after last year's warm weather kept it closed through the entire winter for the first time in its history. JUSTIN TANG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

## Oregon, the first state to decriminalize drugs, looks to alter course in face of rising overdoses

NATHAN VANDERKLIPPE  
INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT

A little more than three years after Oregon voters made their state the first jurisdiction in North America to decriminalize drug possession, legislators are scrambling to write a new set of laws amid a public revolt against the state's experiment with rapid drug policy liberalization.

In 2020, Oregon passed Measure 110, which eliminated criminal penalties for personal drug possession and diverted

most cannabis revenue to fund drug treatment and recovery services. Audits have found that it has cut the cost of arresting and prosecuting people for simple drug possession by nearly US\$20-million a year. Programs supported by its funds have provided thousands of people with help.

But in the year leading up to May, 2023, Oregon overdose deaths rose 17 per cent, far greater than the national average increase of less than 1 per cent. The state has had faster growth in teen drug deaths than any other state.

The reasons are complex, and partly linked to the arrival of fentanyl. But public

opinion has badly soured on decriminalization. In 2020, nearly 60 per cent of voters supported Measure 110. Last year, polling found nearly two-thirds say they now want it partly rolled back. A majority want an outright repeal.

Now, change is coming.

Legislators in Oregon have introduced a trio of placeholder bills, and are widely expected to bring back some form of new drug penalties, although their severity and scope have yet to be finalized. The state's drug law is expected to be a major issue in a legislative session that begins in February.

■ DRUGS, A6

## 'I never give up': At 99, B.C. competitive swimmer is smashing records and surprising even herself

MARTY KLINKENBERG

Betty Brussel learned to swim as a teenager in the canals of Amsterdam, but didn't become a serious swimmer until she was 68 years old and living in Canada. She is a sprightly 99 now and a multiple world record holder.

On Saturday, Ms. Brussel set records in the 400-metre freestyle, 50-metre backstroke and 50-metre breaststroke at the Victoria Masters Swim Club Meet at the Commonwealth Pool in Saanich, B.C.

She competed in the 100- to 104-year-old age class because the divisions are based on the year a competitor is born.

She was born on July 28, 1924. The second of 12 children, she developed a love for swimming in the capital of the Netherlands, even though there wasn't money in the family budget for lessons.

Ms. Brussel spoke brightly on Sunday of her longevity from her home in New Westminster, on the mainland. "I am really very fortunate. I am healthy and don't take any medicine at all."

She wears a hearing aid, lives alone in a two-bedroom apartment, taps away on her laptop and drives herself to swimming sessions twice a week in Surrey, about 20 minutes away.

"I love being in a pool and gliding through the water," Ms. Brussel said. "I feel

better when I get out than when I go in. Swimming is my love. It makes me forget all of my worries and I feel great."

She grew up in the Great Depression and was 15 when the Second World War began.

"Those were not easy years," she said. "We had to make sure we had enough food. My parents took me out of school so I could help look after the little ones. That was our life and we didn't know any better."

Ms. Brussel and her late husband, Gerrit, moved to Canada in 1959 and settled in B.C. She has three children - now 69, 72 and 74 years old.

■ SWIMMING, A15



INDIA

Modi to lead inauguration of grand Hindu temple as election campaign looms

■ A5

RAJESH KUMAR SINGH/  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Liberals hope to regroup after rocky 2023 with clearer vision coming out of cabinet retreat ■ A3

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# Liberals and NDP negotiate pharmacare now to fight over it later

CAMPBELL CLARK  
OPINION



If you ask Liberals about the pharmacare commitments they made in their deal with the NDP, they tend to emphasize that they promised very little.

The supply-and-confidence agreement the two parties struck in 2022 calls for progress toward a national pharmacare program – but not actual pharmacare.

The Liberals and NDP were supposed to pass framework legislation for a future pharmacare program by the end of 2023, but both agreed to an extension till March.

There are two tricky aspects to the negotiations. One is that the two parties have very different ideas of what national pharmacare should be, and so they're trying to draft legislation for two vastly different programs.

The other is that the NDP insists on a starter version of pharmacare – with federal coverage for a handful of drugs – right away.

There will be a deal. Both Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh want to keep their supply-and-confidence agreement, which ensures the survival of the Liberal government and the current Parliament till 2025. Neither is doing very well in the polls. Neither wants the risk of an election any time soon.

But the odd thing is that both also know their joint work on pharmacare will eventually end up with their parties on separate sides. Both expect they'll be fighting over it in the next election campaign.

The NDP vision is the full deal: universal national pharmacare with the government as bulk buyer and single payer for a wide list of prescription drugs.

The Liberal model is a more limited fill-the-gaps program for a narrower list of drugs for those who don't have other insurance coverage – closer to Prince Edward Island's pharmacare.

Drafting legislation that can be used for both is possible, and that's all the supply-and-confidence agreement calls for. But politically, that's not enough for the NDP.

They want to be able to show there are some concrete things coming out of their arrangement with the Liberals, so they are insisting the legislation be accompanied by coverage of a small number of widely-used drugs, such as diabetes medications.

The New Democrats know that there won't be national pharmacare before the next election slated for the fall of 2025. But they don't want to go into the campaign telling voters that the pharmacare arrangements at the heart of their multiyear deal to support the Liberals didn't provide any actual drug coverage.

"There has to be tangible relief from drug costs for Canadians in order for this entire effort to have political payoff," said long-time NDP strategist Brad Lavigne, now a partner with Counsel Public Affairs, in an interview.

Both parties are motivated negotiators. The Liberals are far behind the Conservatives in polls, so they are willing to make a deal. The NDP isn't doing so well, either, so they won't push their demands too far.

But this isn't two parties working together toward a shared plan for pharmacare. By the time the next election campaign arrives, the Liberals and the NDP will be on opposite sides.

In fact, we can expect three visions of pharmacare on offer: the Conservatives will presumably advocate for the current system of mostly private drug insurance; the NDP will campaign for full universal pharmacare; and the Liberals will call for something in between.

Historically, the Liberals have often liked to position themselves that way, between their opponents like Goldilocks – in this case arguing that the Conservatives proposal is too little and the NDP's too much.

Health Minister Mark Holland told reporters last fall that the government can't afford to pay \$40-billion or \$45-billion on pharmacare – pumping up the sticker shock.

The sums are for universal pharmacare are indeed enormous, but not quite as enormous as Mr. Holland suggests. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated that full universal pharmacare would cost \$33.2-billion in total in 2024-25, but that would be \$11.2-billion more than existing levels of provincial and federal spending.

So far, polls suggest more Canadians support a limited public drug-insurance program over universal pharmacare. But that is a debate between the Liberals and the NDP that isn't likely to come to a head until the 2025 election – a vote that right now, neither party seems likely to win.

## METRO VANCOUVER ISSUES AIR QUALITY BULLETIN AFTER NOXIOUS SMELL TRIGGERS COMPLAINTS

VANCOUVER Officials in Metro Vancouver fielded about 100 complaints about a putrid smell permeating British Columbia's Lower Mainland on Sunday, prompting the regional federation of municipalities to issue an air quality bulletin for the area.

It said an incident at Burnaby's Parkland fuel refinery caused the "strong chemical odour" around the region and enforcement officers were sent to the site to make sure Parkland was complying with its emissions permit. Metro Vancouver is responsible for issuing air emissions permits and environmental regulation.

Vancouver Fire Chief Karen Fry said the odour was tied to the "hydro carbon industrial event" from the refinery in neighbouring Burnaby.

She said Burnaby fire crews were on scene at the refinery, but the "strong odour" was persisting and forced the City of Vancouver to issue a public safety advisory across the area.

Ms. Fry said Burnaby was monitoring air quality, and Vancouver's public safety advisory urged residents to close their windows if they smell anything or move indoors "out of an abundance of caution."

Burnaby's Parkland refinery issued an advisory Friday about an "elevated flare" burn-off because of "extreme weather conditions."

The city's fire department found "no immediate concerns related to the safety of citizens," but advised people to close windows or move indoors if they smelled the odour.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Rubina Qureshi, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's at 64, and her husband Pasha speak publicly about how people with Alzheimer's can make the best of their remaining years. JENNIFER ROBERTS/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

## Alzheimer's: There is little culturally appropriate information available on the illness, researcher says

■ FROM A1

Because there are no reliable national data on dementia, the Alzheimer Society and CANCEA drew on 2016 census figures to create a computer simulation model that projects how the demographics of dementia in Canada will change in the coming decades.

Dementia is an umbrella term for more than 50 brain diseases and conditions, the most common of which is Alzheimer's.

The study forecasts rising numbers of people with dementia in all census groups between 2020 and 2050, including a 507-per-cent increase among those of African origin; a 434-per-cent increase among people with Latin American roots; a 318-per-cent increase among people with a Caribbean background; and a 273-per-cent increase among Indigenous people. But those groups, taken together, would still only make up about 7 per cent of the projected total, or approximately 116,000 patients.

Most people with dementia in Canada today – 87 per cent of the total – are those who described themselves in the census as European or Canadian. By 2050, their share is expected to drop to 68 per cent, the study says.

The biggest anticipated change is among Asians with dementia. The study predicts their numbers will reach 413,940 by 2050, up 785 per cent from an estimated 46,760 in 2020.

"We need to make sure that our systems of care are set up to reflect their needs," said Joshua Armstrong, a research scientist with the Alzheimer Society and

the report's lead author.

Age is the biggest risk factor for Alzheimer's and similar diseases.

Canada's population, led by the baby boomers, is getting older, which Dr. Armstrong said explains most of the anticipated rise in dementia cases over the next couple of decades.

The projected shift in the race of patients is primarily a consequence of changes in immigration patterns, but the model also accounts for the fact that some communities have higher dementia risk because of poverty, low education levels and chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure can predispose people to dementia.

Navjot Gill, a University of Waterloo researcher working toward a PhD in public health, saw first-hand how little culturally appropriate information was available for her family when her grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease a few years ago.

Ms. Gill searched online for resources that would help explain the illness to her parents in their first language, Punjabi. All she could find was a clumsily dubbed video that featured an old white couple in what looked like the British suburbs. Ms. Gill said the video left her parents thinking, "This is a Western disease, right? It doesn't happen in our community."

Later, when she worked for the Alzheimer Society for a summer, Ms. Gill found herself helping to run community events that were all in English. "It made me reflect," she said. "My grandmother can't access any of these

because she doesn't speak the language. She doesn't understand the culture."

Ms. Gill, who is studying the experiences of South Asians with dementia in Canada for her PhD thesis, said the situation is improving, with more hospitals and memory clinics producing culturally appropriate materials in Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu and other languages.

Still, challenges persist. Dr. Wong said that in his practice as a gerontologist, he often meets overburdened South and East Asian families struggling with a cultural taboo against placing a parent or grandparent in a nursing home.

"There's also a huge piece about stigma," he said, adding that often leads to late diagnoses. "To many individuals living with dementia and their families within the Asian community, there's a sense that this is a very private matter."

Rubina and Pasha Qureshi, who are originally from Pakistan, are trying to change that.

Ms. Qureshi, 67, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease just after her 64th birthday. Her short-term memory has faded – she uses an iPad to keep track of meals and outfits she knows she'll forget – but her good humour has not.

She and her husband now speak publicly about how people with Alzheimer's can make the best of their remaining years.

"You have to figure out how to deal with things," Ms. Qureshi said. "My iPad is my second brain, whatever I need to remember, I write that right down and I don't get frustrated."

## Swimming: Filmmaker is working on a documentary about Betty Brussel

■ FROM A1

She is a member of the White Rock Wave Swim Club, walks at a fast pace and never lets anybody help her with her bag full of gear.

On Saturday, she swam the 400-metre freestyle in 12 minutes and 50.3 seconds. The previous record in her age class was 16:36.80. She completed the 50-metre backstroke in 1:24.91, breaking the existing mark by nearly five seconds. Her time in the 50-metre breaststroke was 1:56.22 in a class in which there was no previous record.

"I was surprised by my own swims yesterday," Ms. Brussel said. "I gave it my all. I never give up. It was wonderful. It was like being in a movie. I was totally overwhelmed by everybody's support."

She had a heart attack a quarter-century ago and wears a pacemaker but shows no ill effects. Before a race starts, she needs somebody to steady her in the starting blocks but that is about it.

"When I am with her, I don't think about her being 99 because she doesn't act that way," said her coach, Linda Stanley Wilson, who is 65. "But when someone brings it up, I think to myself, 'How many other people are doing this?'"

When her coach offers advice, Ms. Brussel tells her, "I will try to do better."

"I mean, how do you approach somebody with advice when they are 99, setting world records and are doing just fine?" Ms. Stanley Wilson said. "Betty will set world, Canadian and British Columbia records pretty much every time she swims."



Betty Brussel, pictured after setting a world record in the 50-metre breaststroke on Saturday, says she was 'totally overwhelmed by everybody's support.' HANNAH WALSH

Ms. Brussel doesn't think about them.

"I like to win but records have never been the most important thing to me," she said. "If somebody else wins, I am happy for them."

Hannah Walsh, a former competitive swimmer and filmmaker, has been working on a documentary about Ms. Brussel. Ms. Walsh, who swam for one year in college in the U.S., reached out to her this summer and hopes to complete the project with possible assistance from a Canada Council grant. She and her partner, Emma Puchniak, hope to have the film released at festivals in the fall of this year.

Ms. Walsh asked if she could swim with Ms. Brussel and was stunned the first time she joined her.

"Due to her age, I didn't really expect much," Ms. Walsh said. "I

thought that maybe she would do a couple laps in a training session. She swam 1,200 to 1,500 metres."

On Saturday, Ms. Brussel competed in five events over all.

"If I swam five events in one meet, I'd be exhausted," said the 26-year-old Ms. Walsh. "She recovered within an hour and said she felt very energized."

Ms. Brussel still reads a Dutch newspaper online every day and takes a long walk.

She lives with her rescue cat, named Mika, and enjoys knitting and embroidery.

"I live life every day and enjoy it," she said. "I feel very fortunate to do what I do. I'm not ready for somebody to look after me."

She has a cellphone primarily for an emergency.

"All of my friends died on me," Ms. Brussel said. "Who am I going to call?"